

PROVIDENCE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM,
Reservoir Avenue Pumping Station
Reservoir and Pontiac Avenues
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HAER No. RI-20-E

HAER
RI
4-PROV,
191E-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Mid-Atlantic Region
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HAER
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
PROVIDENCE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM:
Reservoir Avenue Pumping Station

HAER NO. RI-20-E

LOCATION: Reservoir and Pontiac Avenues,
Providence, Providence County, Rhode
Island
UTM:19.297880.4628830
Quad: Providence, RI

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1931

ENGINEER: S. Frank Nolan

PRESENT OWNER: Narragansett Bay Commission
44 Washington Street, Providence, RI

PRESENT USE: Sewage Pumping Station

SIGNIFICANCE: The Reservoir Avenue Pumping Station was
built in 1931 to convey sewage from a
low-lying and increasingly populated
area of Providence up to a gravity line
and thence to the main pumping station
at Ernest Street. From there it was
pumped to the city's Fields Point Plant
for treatment. The Reservoir Avenue
Pumping Station is thus historically and
functionally associated with
Providence's sewage treatment system.
Its construction, like that of the
earlier (1913) Washington Park pump
station, illustrates the continued
expansion of the system in response to
the residential and industrial
expansion of the city in the early
decades of the 20th century.

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DESCRIPTION:

The Reservoir Avenue Sewage Pumping Station is situated on the south side of the intersection of Reservoir and Pontiac Avenues, very near the southern city limit, in an area of southwest Providence known as the "Reservoir Section" or "Triangle". Erected in 1931, the building consists of a poured concrete substructure containing wet and dry wells, and a hipped-roofed superstructure with red pressed brick exterior. Natural illumination is provided by narrow horizontal windows set high in the walls below soldier-arched heads. Metal doors are located in the east and north elevations.

The north door opens onto a small concrete platform above the wet well, which occupies about two-thirds of the substructure. Two manually-operated gates control the flow of sewage past bar screens (not in use) into two concrete channels. A pneumatic float system regulates the level of sewage within these channels. At a predetermined level, sensors cause one of the pumps to turn on automatically, to pump sewage 300-400 feet east (and raising it about 16 feet) to a gravity conduit in Rutherford Avenue. A manually-operated gate in the wall between the channels permits the flow to be confined to one channel or the other, if necessary for repairs or maintenance.

The east door provides access to the control room, in which the pump motors and controls are located. The control room has interior walls of yellow glazed brick. Steel bulkheads in the floor, inset with glass block, provide a small amount of natural illumination as well as access to the pumps.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

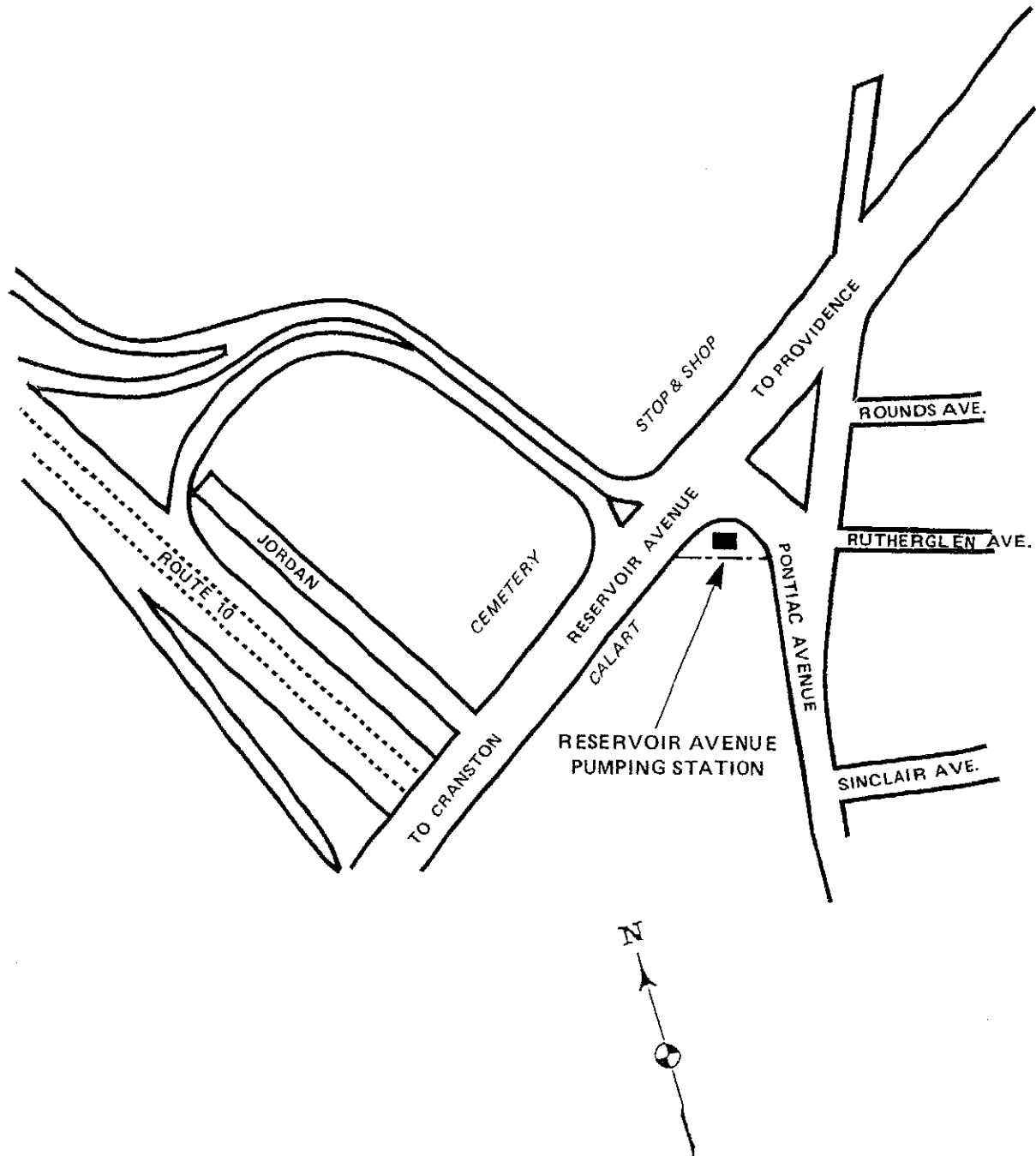
The Reservoir Avenue Pumping Station was built in 1931 under City Engineer S. Frank Nolan to facilitate the conveyance of sewage from a low-lying area of the city to the treatment plant at Fields Point. The station pumps sewage up to a gravity conduit in Rutherford Avenue, whence it flows to the South Providence interceptor and then to the main pumping station at Ernest Street. Authorization for construction of the pump station was obtained through a City Council resolution in April, 1931. The "triangle" it was intended to service lay immediately adjacent to the east, consisting of approximately 50 acres located between Reservoir Ave., Pontiac Ave., and what is now Route 10. This area, lying south of Mashpaug Pond, was included in Providence's reannexation of part of Cranston in 1868. Located at the extreme south edge of the city, the "triangle" was apparently not

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extensively populated until the 20th century. That it had been by the end of the 1920's is indicated by the decision to build a pump station to service the area.

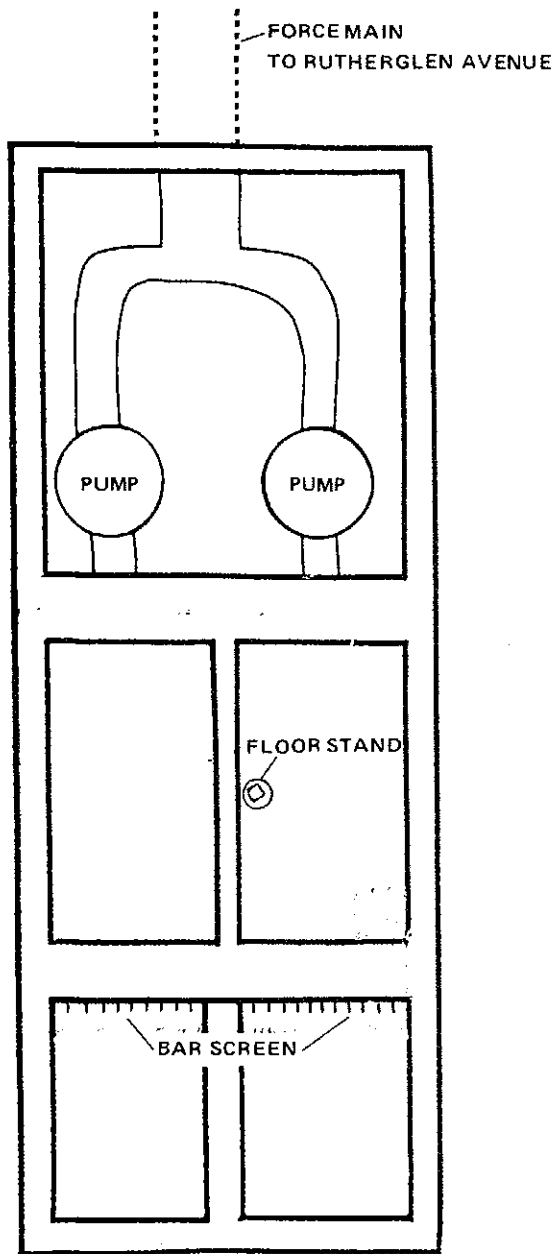
BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Department of Public Works, Providence. Annual Report of 1931.

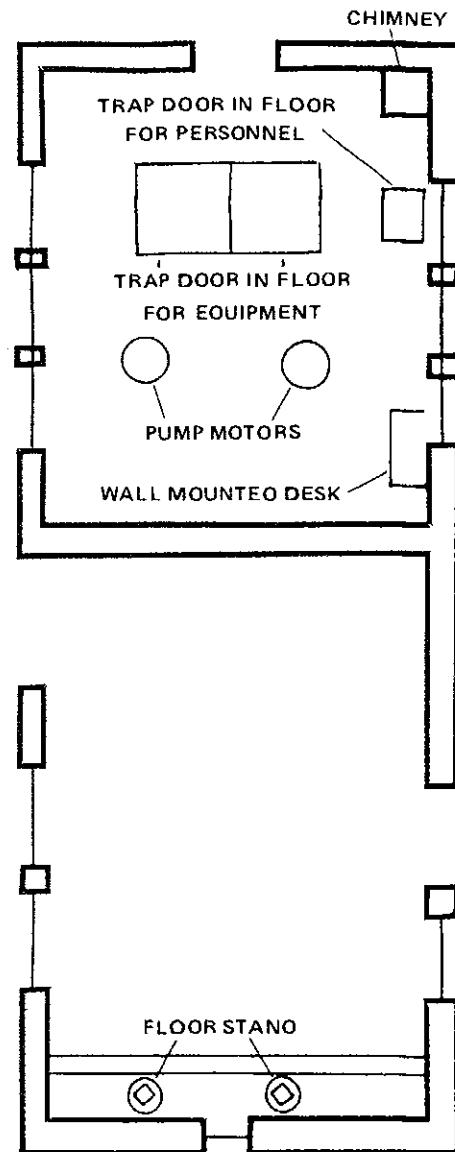


LOCATION PLAN NOT TO SCALE

Source: Narragansett Bay Commission



SUBSTRUCTURE



SUPERSTRUCTURE

